

out into the valley at the foot of Main street, offered the first resistance to the tremendous wave which shot down from the broken dam, and this hill turned the destructive wave through the Main street business district.

Stretch of Mud and Gravel.

The valley along the western edge of the village was covered yesterday with comfortable homes. To-day it is a bare stretch of gravel, mud and muddy rivulets. All the houses in that part of the town were carried away. So great was the force of the wave that even the depressions of the cellars are wiped out. But to the east, around the Main street right angled corner, the Goodyear Hill forced the water to disgorge its load of broken wood and shattered bricks, and the wreckage of the entire town lies now in two great piles, covering most of what was the business section. As one comes into town on the railroad the smaller of these two piles is the only wreckage to be seen, but a walk of a few hundred yards around into the Main street shows the second and larger pile of debris.

Even those immense piles of torn timbers and broken halves of houses do not impress the onlooker as does the next view of the stricken town that one has after a tortuous climb over the wreckage. From the side of the hills of the Blue Ridge of the Alleghenies, on the western edge of the little town, the vista of a quarter-mile wide valley, just an even mile in length swept entirely bare, with the evidence that only yesterday it was covered with houses, discloses the magnitude of the disaster. Along Main street, where the wreckage gleamed by the force of the water, the force of the load thrown against the buildings, cracked them wide open and even mowed some of them down to a level with the ground.

Residents of the town are standing about the wreckage in a hopeless sort of way, while volunteers from all the surrounding towns are starting the first work of clearing it away preparatory to the final search for the many bodies which must be concealed in it. Until this job has been done the extent of the loss of life will not be known. The wreckage covers more than two acres and is piled both high and solidly. In addition to the mass of broken house timbers and scattered bricks there is mixed in it 100,000 cords of pulp wood swept away from the paper company's plant. This mass of wood formed a battering ram which helped the wave of water in its terrible work of sweeping down the houses in its path. It was stored in the paper company's yard, just below the dam, and as the water crashed through it picked up this wood, the first object in its path, and carried it on.

Townfolk Are Hopeless.

At present the attitude of the townsfolk is one of hopelessness. Many of them said to-day that they would not rebuild their homes, that they would not stay in Austin any longer. Where they would go or what they would do did not concern them, their only thought seemed to be to get away from the place of devastation. The greatest present need of the survivors is for women's and children's clothing and for bed clothing. Foodstuffs have been sent in abundance, in charge of the State Board of Health and the state constabulary, but the donations of clothing have been meagre so far.

Before noon to-day a cold downpour of rain added to the discomfort of the homeless ones, and while it helped to quench the smoldering fires that have been going on since yesterday afternoon it also hampered the work of clearing up the debris.

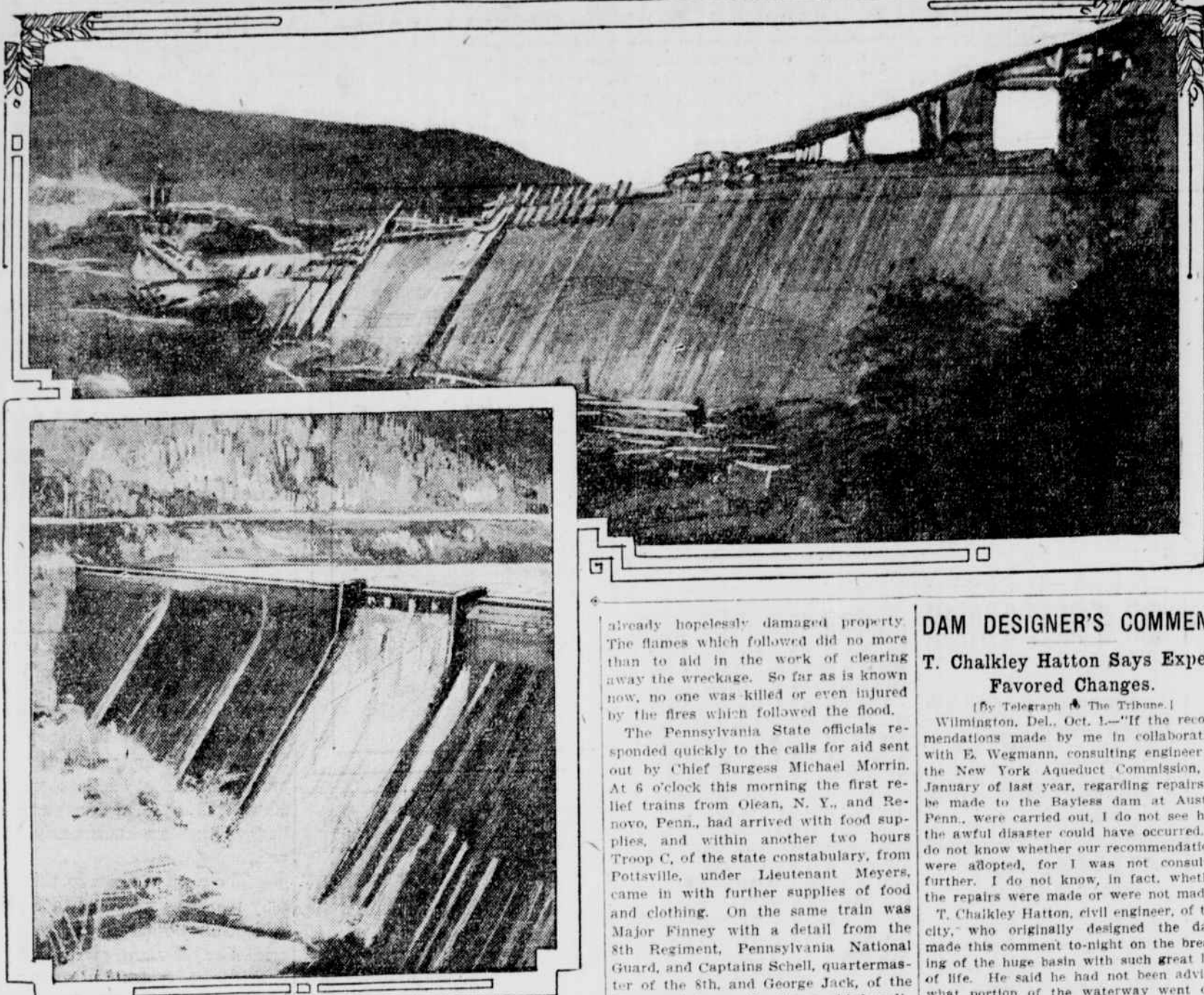
Perhaps the most distressing feature of the day was the sad procession of body bearers which threaded a passage across the clean swept valley during the early hours of the afternoon, when it was decided to move all the bodies found up to that time to Grube's undertaking rooms, at the east end of the village. Up to that time about twenty of the dead bodies had been kept in the village schoolhouse, situated on Goodyear Hill, on the western edge of the town, to facilitate the work of identification. Dr. Royer and his assistants of the State Board of Health ordered that all the bodies be brought to the east end undertaking rooms. Stretchers were improvised and a procession of volunteers carried the victims of the disaster across the desolate and muddy field where less than a day before their homes had stood.

Dam Recently Changed.

Roughly speaking, the disaster was caused by a section of the dam about thirty feet in width breaking off from

GENERAL VIEW OF THE BAYLESS DAM AT AUSTIN.

Showing its great length, stretching from one side of the valley to the other. (Photograph furnished by T. Chalkley Hatton, the engineer who built the dam.)



THE BREAST OF THE DAM WHEN FULL.

Considerable water is shown flowing over the spillway. The cracks in the breast, which developed in January, 1910, are indicated by the thin streams of water issuing from them.

the force of the water pressure behind it, but back of this evident cause lies the story of the making and care of the concrete wall, and particularly the story of the recent changes in its construction. Originally the wall was built to a height of forty-nine feet. It stretched across the valley for six hundred feet in a straight line. Last April this wall slipped eighteen inches, because it was not strong enough to stand the pressure put on it. Engineers then examined it and ordered that two chunks be cut out of the top. One of these was at the western edge of the wall, the other a little to the east of the middle. With that cut of a safety valve, the wall stood, although the occasion of its slipping brought on a panic in the town that has been vividly remembered since.

Farley Gannett, chief engineer for the State Water Supply Commission, examined the broken structure to-day, and said that his observation, coupled with what he had learned from an examination of representatives of the paper company, disclosed that recently the chunk taken out last April from the western edge of the dam had been filled up. Last Saturday, he said, workmen began to fill up the other chunk, the one near the middle of the dam.

Mr. Gannett's measurements showed him that four feet of new cement had been added within the last few days. This naturally increased the pressure of water on the concrete wall, with the result that the thirty-foot chunk in the center gave away. With that outlet the heavy rush of water easily broke another big hole, and through these two gaps the tidal wave, of destruction swept down on the defenseless town.

Eyewitness Tells of Break.

John Newman, of Condersport, Penn., was an eyewitness of the disaster which happened to be in a position to see the beginning of it. Standing with a friend on the hillside near the front wall of the dam yesterday afternoon, Newman noticed what he thought was a too rapid flow of water over the top of the concrete wall.

"Isn't it leaking a lot?" he asked his friend, and almost as the words left his mouth the first section to give away cracked with a loud report.

"My God! there she goes," said Newman, and almost before they could move the wall of water, headed by the battering ram of pulp wood, began to strike the first of the houses in its path. "The suddenness of it was indescribable," said Newman to-day. "Just while we stood there, half paralyzed, that big wave shot down the valley and began to cut down houses as if they were made of paper. I saw houses ripped up, first one side and then back to the other, before they left their foundations, and then they'd be swept along as easily as a woman would sweep a little dirt."

Mr. Gannett, the engineer, heard Newman's story, and he added a technical detail which bore the "weakest link" in this chain, where breaking devastated a whole town.

"At the point where the first break occurred," said Gannett, "I found a perfectly smooth surface. It was evidently a point which had marked the end of one day's work and the beginning of another of the construction of the dam. The workmen evidently did not 'rough' the concrete at this particular point, and to give it a grip to take the place of the 'roughing' that had stuck in four or five iron bars. These bars were still sticking in the under stone, but they were bent and twisted in a way that showed plainly that the pressure behind had forced the upper stone off. With that one block gone the wall crumbled in two places, very much as a string of dominos 'breaks' when forced from both ends."

Very Few Were Injured.

Practically speaking, there were no injured to be chronicled in this disaster. Those who were fortunate and quick enough escaped to the hillsides which surround the town, and those who did not were killed almost instantly.

dition, owing to his terrible experience in the disaster, is so bad that unless his mood changes his life is likely to pay the forfeit. The Commercial Hotel, where Lawler worked, was at Main street and Railroad avenue, the angle at which the mass of wreckage began to pile up. When the warning came Lawler ran into the street and turned south toward his home, where his wife and two young children were. Dashing into the house he grabbed his baby boy, while his wife started out, carrying their two-year-old girl. In the street again, Lawler saw that he could not hope to gain the protecting hillside, a short two hundred yards away, but, dragging his wife along, he gamely tried it. The tearing wave struck them, and the onlookers saw the whole family carried off their feet.

They were carried away on its crest for a quarter of a mile to the other side of the valley. So terrible was the force that drove them that they were thrown up on the other side beyond the reach of the steady flow which followed, and the first rescue parties found them unconscious on the grass, half covered with debris.

Lawler's unconscious arms still clutched his baby boy, and to the wondering surprise of the rescuers both were alive and responded to treatment, but his wife and the little girl were dead. In the hospital he kept inquiring for his loved ones, and even though the nurses and doctors tried to keep the sad news from him, Lawler suspected it and to-night is inconsolable.

The first alarm came from a porter of a roadside situated on the upper hillside, near the dam. Harry Davis, the porter, telephoned to Lena Binckley, at the village central, that the dam had broken.

"Run for your lives; the dam's gone! Give warning!" was Davis's message, and for a moment the girl would not believe him.

First Thought It Was a Joke.

"Quit your kidding!" was her first answer, but Davis's tone, more than his words, drove home the warning, and she telephoned to the Standard Kindling Wood Company, whose whistle gives the village signal for fire and other troubles. Her message was misunderstood by the engineer there, with the result that he gave a series of short blasts on his factory whistle, signifying fire. Townsfolk say that any trouble at the dam should be signalled by one long continued blast of the whistle.

At any rate, the survivors' accounts showed that the town in general accepted the signal as being on account of a fire, and, instead of starting a stampede for the safety of the hillsides, the warning merely brought out the folks who were mildly curious to see where the fire was. The shouting of others, together with the terrible roar of the approaching wave, furnished the first warning of the real disaster that was impending, and by that time many were caught helplessly far from the protection of the hillsides.

Worse than that, as it appeared afterward, the mistaken signal resulted in the destruction of the town's only firefighting apparatus, a hose cart and reel, for the firemen dashed around the corner of Main street and south into Railroad avenue, thinking that the fire was in the residence section in the western valley. As they rounded the corner they saw the mistake, for the wall of water was even then bearing down on them less than a block away. They abandoned horses and apparatus and scrambled in a wild scramble for the hillside. All of them escaped.

Natural Gas Added to Danger.

This village gets its lighting and cooking power from natural gas, and when the wrecking wave passed over the town, ripping everything in its course, the gas was pouring from hundreds of broken pipes. Cocks in the wreckage showed the exact time of the disaster as 2:28 p. m., and in less than an hour after that the water began to recede swiftly. Along its trail of destruction a small scourge of fires, started from the leakage of natural gas, broke out, and in one or two instances burned steadily for hours. Those fires lighted up the disaster last night with an uncanny glow, but so far as damaging property was concerned, their effect was as nothing. The water had

already hopelessly damaged property. The flames which followed did no more than to aid in the work of clearing away the wreckage. So far as is known now, no one was killed or even injured by the fires which followed the flood.

The Pennsylvania State officials responded quickly to the calls for aid sent out by Chief Burgess Michael Morrin. At 6 o'clock this morning the first relief trains from Olean, N. Y., and Renovo, Penn., had arrived with food supplies, and within another two hours Troop C, of the state constabulary, from Pottsville, under Lieutenant Meyers, came in with further supplies of food and clothing. On the same train was Major Finney with a detail from the 8th Regiment, Pennsylvania National Guard, and Captains Schell, quartermaster of the 8th, and George Jack, of the Governor's troop. Dr. Royer, chief medical inspector of the State Board of Health, and a corps of nurses were also on that train, and with their advent order began to come out of the hopeless chaos that gripped the town up to that time.

Doctor Took Charge.

The medical representatives, assisted by thirty doctors from nearby towns, took charge of the distribution of supplies, and both survivors and volunteer wreckage clearing crews from the vicinity were fed from an improvised mess in Odd Fellows' Hall. Meanwhile the State Constabulary took charge of the situation around the wreckage, but their labors were chiefly of direction. Late this evening Lieutenant Meyers said that here had been no vandalism and that his men have been busy at nothing except directing and assisting in the work of clearing away the wreckage and debris.

The property loss of the village is estimated to-night at approximately \$5,000,000. Of this the Bayless Pulp and Paper Company is damaged to the extent of about \$1,500,000. The dam which it owned cost about \$100,000. The Goodyear Lumber Company lost about \$1,000,000. The Buffalo & Susquehanna Railroad station tracks and shops were damaged to the extent of about \$500,000. Four churches and three hotels were smashed to pieces and wiped out, and about five hundred houses were either wiped out entirely or so cracked and shaken as to make them useless and unsafe.

Ernest Bicknell, from the Washington headquarters of the Red Cross, arrived on a later train this afternoon with the Red Cross emergency fund of \$15,000. He was accompanied by Dr. C. J. Dixon, head of the State Board of Health, and F. Herbert Snow, chief sanitary engineer of Pennsylvania, who with five assistants will take charge of the work of re-establishing the village and looking after its sanitation in the mean time.

'PHONE GIRL THE HEROINE Gave Alarm in Austin Before Fleeing for Her Life.

Austin, Penn., Oct. 1.—Credit for the quick spreading of the alarm that the dam had gone was given to-day to Miss Lena Binckley, a telephone operator.

Miss Binckley saved her own life even after the torrents had rushed down the little valley of death. Horror stricken with what she had witnessed, the girl was found this afternoon among other refugees. The girl's experience in the short time that it took to wipe out the community is best told by herself.

"I was about to leave my board for the day," she said, "when a message came from a number near the dam. It was a man's voice, and he cried: 'The dam has broken. Warn people below.' I afterward learned that this man was Harry Davis. He and some others had been up there looking at the water and the pulp seeping through the dam."

"I heard a roar like distant thunder up the valley. It sounded as though a thousand trees were snapping right at my ears. The valley seemed to darken. I began to work the switch plugs and call as many persons as I could; I also had them blow the whistles and ring the bells. I worked party lines as much as possible, and then I thought about the people at Costello's. They were two miles down, and I was afraid that I could do no more for the poor people in Austin. I only got a couple of messages into Costello, and then the crest of the flood descended right by my ears."

"I can't remember anything that took place around me. Finally my board failed to work."

Miss Binckley then rushed to the street screaming the warning cry. "The dam has broken!" As she fled for her life toward the steep hillside at the north end of Main street she kept up her cries, warning dozens. Turning toward the valley, she saw the great wall of water descending on the town.

"From where I stood," she said to-day, "the wall of water seemed fifty feet high. Above it rose a great cloud of spray, in which houses seemed to toss, bumping against one another, spinning and turning as they fell to pieces or were swept out of my sight. The noise was appalling."

"When I fled from Main street there were scores of people behind me, many of them children. They did not seem to appreciate the imminence of their danger. Some turned into stores, as if to make a casual purchase. While I was looking down on them, utterly helpless to give further warning, the cloud of mist that seemed to precede the flood hid them from view and a moment later the green water buried the houses from my sight."

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Women Sacrificed Lives to Save Children, Men Fought to Aid Families.

GIRL'S LEG CHOPPED OFF

Great Weights Hurlled About Like Straws When Mass of Wood Was Forced by Great Flood Toward Town.

Austin, Penn., Oct. 1.—Few connected stories were obtainable from the flood survivors until to-day. All night long the living ones wandered about the wreckage or sat silently on the hillsides. But to-day they talked freely, almost carelessly, in the nervousness of the terrible experiences they had faced.

Boyd Lockhard, a young business man of Austin, had a narrow escape. Mr. Lockhard said that when he heard the alarm given he thought some one was playing a practical joke, and he went in the street to watch the people's actions. He looked in the direction of the dam and saw the oncoming flood was only three blocks away.

"It looked like a wall of wood twenty-five feet high," he said. "At first glance I did not see the water at all, because the wood at the pulp mill was carried before the water and became a sort of battering ram, that tore away the buildings of the town. I ran toward the hill, and by the greatest effort got above the level of the water while it was surging within ten feet of me. The ground began to give way under me, but I managed to clamber a few feet further and caught hold of a tree, to which I clung."

J. C. Forchard, who lived within half a mile of Costello, said to-day that when the crest of the flood swept past his home there were no signs of human beings or their houses in the debris.

"The entire surface of the flood was covered with newly sawn timber and pieces of lumber," he said. "It was not until a lapse of five or six minutes that pieces of houseposts, broken furniture and other evidences of the destruction of the town began to appear."

Had Ample Warning Below.

"The people of Costello," he said, "received ample warning from Austin that the dam had broken, and although forty or fifty houses were demolished, only three fatalities occurred."

One of the most pathetic in the long list of tragedies is the case of James Leaman, a night worker, who was asleep at his home and did not hear the alarm. When the rush of water swallowed up his little home he was tossed out on a pile of floating debris and eventually floated a mile and a half below the village. Wounded and bruised, he made his way back, and to find that his wife and four children had perished.

W. D. Robertson, another night worker, watchman at the Bayless mills, was asleep on the third story of the Starkweather building when aroused by the roar of the flood. He stepped out on a balcony commanding a view of the onrushing waters.

"Houses were tossing about like corks," he said. "I was transfixed with horror, unable to make a move to save myself. The entire building lurched forward and then collapsed. I fell two stories with the building and found myself protected by a bridge which had formed by wedged timbers. I escaped, and I am mighty glad to be here to tell about it. I have three little kiddies in Erie. Thank God they were not here."

One Armed Man Escaped.

Frank Robinson, a one-armed photographer, was also on the third story of the Starkweather building when the flood came. He said he heard the fire whistle, but paid no attention to it, and the last thing he knew the building fairly lurched across the street. He was hurled through a window and landed on top of debris on which he floated to safety.

Robert Cranley said: "I was about 100 feet below the dam when it gave way. I saw the wall of water rushing down on me, and although it poured over me at least thirty feet high, it threw me flat on the ground. Some of the debris hit me on the top of the head. I came bobbing up to the top of the twisting, snaking mass and grabbed the branches of a tree as it shot past me. I was rescued while clinging to it last night."

Employees of the Bayless pulp and paper mill had as thrilling experiences as any. There were two hundred and fifty hands at work yesterday when the flood came. Fifty of them were young women, employed on the first floor. It is thought that all except five of these girls, who were employed in the grinding room, grasped the shafting above him when saw the wall of the mill cave in. The whirling countess caused him to lose his grip and he sank in the waters. He was again tossed up and caught in the tangled machinery, in whose vice-like grip he was rescued, after calling for two hours for help. He was taken to the hospital, with both legs broken.

Saw Her Leg Cut Off.

Mary Blatt, an employee in the counting room, told the reporters in the hospital to-day how it feels to have a leg amputated with an ax.

"I was busy at my books," she said, "when suddenly there lurched through the wall one of the big pulp grinding stones of the mill. As I leaped aside to avoid it the ceiling caved in and the water followed and passed over me. Rescuers found me pinned beneath the grinding stone. They tried to release me, but failed. The great stone was too big to move, and I felt as if I should surely die there."

"Get an ax and cut my leg off," I told them. But no man would volunteer. 'Cut it off,' I pleaded. 'You can stand it if I can.'"

"I looked up and saw Joe Venarke, a friend of mine. 'You do it, Joe, for me,' I pleaded. I was in awful pain, and nothing could be worse torture than what I was enduring. 'I can't do that, Mary,' he said."

"I asked a big man back of him to do it. He picked up the ax. By the lantern light I saw the descending blade gliten. I think he chopped it four or five times before they cut it off. Even as late as to-day two persons were rescued alive from the ruins of the mill. One is an infant, a few months old, which was coming and crying alternately when rescuers came upon it, wrapped in a blanket. The baby, a girl, had evidently slipped from the arm of someone who was trying to carry her to safety. The child has not been identified.

Close by the bodies of Anna Jackson and

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Florence Melzer a man also was rescued alive, but in a precarious condition.

Laughed at Warning.

Mrs. Martha Kinnicut, a restaurant keeper, laughed when warned of the flood. A child was drinking a glass of soda. "Oh, let the kid finish her glass," said Mrs. Kinnicut to a boy who came running in with the alarm. A few moments afterward the store was swept away, and the woman and child are among the missing.

The young son of Mrs. Thomas Reese was sitting on the doorstep of his father's house when the flood came dashing down. Their house is on high ground, and is one of the few that escaped. His mother had just darted out of the door, when she saw her boy swept into the waters. The frantic mother plunged in to save him, when a big Hungarian waded in and pulled her out on the bank.

Infuriated with rage and fear and steeled with the hope that she might save her boy, she turned back to the flood. In restraining her from plunging in her clothes were torn from her body and her arms broken. Her child was drowned.

Mrs. William H. Eichardt escaped from her house, but turned back to get a handbag containing \$20. She was drowned. Those of her party escaped. This afternoon her handbag was found, but her body has not yet been recovered.

Mrs. Jay Gallup was helped over the barbed wire fence where many persons met death by an unknown woman, who sacrificed her life that a mother might be saved.

"You go," she said to Mrs. Gallup. "You've got a baby in your arms."

A curious sight in the valley just below Austin to-day was a train of Buffalo & Susquehanna cars, loaded with coal and weighing hundreds of tons, which had been carried two hundred yards from the tracks. Two of the cars stood upended, forming an inverted letter "A" upon the apex of which was about a ton of hay, high and dry.

RELIEF SUPPLIES AMPLE

State Equips Camp for Austin Flood Survivors.

Austin, Penn., Oct. 1.—The survivors of the flood disaster will not suffer from hunger or lack of care, as the supplies and medical assistance rushed to the place to-day seem ample to care for them. E. F. Bicknell, national director of the National Red Cross, arrived, bringing with him \$15,000 in cash for immediate aid to the flood victims. The homeless have all been provided with shelter. On the outskirts of Austin are several houses which were vacated by workers in the Goodyear mill when that plant was dismantled. Those houses have been filled with homeless people. The residents of Keating Summit have taken in the others, several hundred in number. Provisions continue to arrive in large quantities, and there will be no suffering for lack of food.

At 10 o'clock the relief train arrived in charge of the Health Department of the State. It was loaded with tents, provisions, coats and clothing—things the people most need. A camp was quickly established on the hillside, and between 10 and 11 o'clock appeared. But it was not until the constabulary, under command of Captain Robertson, reached here, at 1 o'clock, that the people took heart.

Country women from miles around drove to the place, and between comforting the Austin women who had lost husbands and children and getting luncheons for the survivors were busy all day and into the night. Meanwhile men fought their way through woods and brush for a mile or more to get pure water for coffee, and more to drive in with large supplies of fresh milk.

Later in the day, after the supply train had arrived, tons of bread, two tons of tomatoes and a two-pound can of roast beef were issued as a day's ration to the head of each surviving household.

Governor Dix telephoned from Albany this morning that the State of New York was prepared to send anything the survivors might need as soon as Pennsylvania accepted, and Governor Wilson of New Jersey offered military supplies, as did Governor Harmon of Ohio.



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